

# RSE BASICS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

FPV has compiled this helpful Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) cheat sheet in plain language to guide parents and carers through the basics of what a young person should know and understand about sex and relationships.

## **Foundation: Explain public and private body parts and places**

Children starting school should know anatomically correct terms for private parts, like the penis, scrotum, vulva, breasts. Explain what places are considered private spaces (bathroom, bedroom). You can start a conversation about consent at this age too. Talk to children about asking for permission before they hug or touch a playmate. Also let them know they are allowed to say 'no' to physical touch (even if it's a friend or family member).

## **Grade 1: Bodily autonomy**

Children at this age are becoming more independent, but they may still require some help with their bodies. Children can start to understand that their body belongs to them, and that no one should make them feel unsafe about their body, including their private parts.

## **Grade 2: Talking to adults about private body parts**

It is helpful for children to have a safety network of people that they can ask about private things like body parts. Around Grade 2, help them identify physical signs that they might exhibit when they feel unsafe (like wobbly legs or racing heart), and nominate which adults they can approach if they feel unsafe. Make sure to nominate a mandatory reporter (like a teacher).

## **Grade 3: Outside private body parts, sexual and reproductive body parts**

By mid-primary school, children should start to understand information about internal body parts and how they work. Explain the names of sexual and reproductive body parts and their function.

## **Grade 4: Puberty**

At this age, children may start to notice their body changing. Make sure they understand what puberty is and why it happens. Books about puberty are helpful to have on hand for specific information about changes. Talk about menstruation (periods) and sperm production with young people of all genders. It helps foster understanding, respect and gender equality.

## **Grade 5: Sex**

By upper primary school students can start to understand how a baby is conceived: either through two people having sex with a penis in the vagina, or through Assisted Reproduction. Have a conversation about the reasons why sex may occur. Sex may be about being close and intimate; making a baby; or for physical pleasure. Sex is only for people who are 'grown up' in their bodies and minds, and only ever when there is consent. Sex doesn't necessarily involve a penis or a vagina, and it doesn't always make a baby.

## **Grade 6: Pornography**

This has become a common way that young people get information about sex. Let them know that pornography is fantasy, not reality. Pornography does not often show negotiations around consent or safety. It is important to connect discussions about consent and safety to 'real' healthy relationships. Make sure they know the word pornography so they can talk to you about it if they see it.

## **Year 7: Respect, Consent, Mutuality & Communication**

Explain these 4 pillars of any healthy relationship. If any one of these is missing from a relationship it could be a sign that the relationship is unhealthy. As those puberty hormones begin to change, so too might a young person's ideas around sexual attraction and identity. Take the time to discuss diversity in bodies, gender and sexuality and how gender stereotypes (i.e. 'boys don't cry', 'girls aren't strong') can create inequality in relationships and friendships.

## **Year 8: Laws and ethics of sexting**

The laws around sexting are complicated, and the ethics of sexting even more so. The key message here is that everyone has a responsibility to behave ethically online. Sharing intimate images without consent or threatening to share them is a crime, no matter how old you are. Sharing images, even with the consent of all parties involved, is illegal for anyone under the age of 18.

## **Year 9: Contraception.**

People of any gender should know what contraception options are available. This is a good opportunity to explain how condoms work. As a part of our RSE courses we use a novelty plastic penis which comes in a banana case to demonstrate. You could use a banana, cucumber or other household item. For teenage girls and non-binary young people who have a uterus and ovaries, discuss contraception options like the pill, IUD, implant or contraceptive injection. It's also important to discuss unplanned pregnancy options. This is also a good opportunity to discuss how someone would know if they were ready for a sexual relationship.

## **Year 10: Sexually Transmissible Infections**

The key message here is to normalise regular testing, and the use of condoms or other barrier methods (like gloves or dental dams). For young people, learning how condoms are used correctly is helpful, and be sure to include discussions and guidance on other barrier methods gloves and dental dams and lubricant. Take the time to talk about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). It's a daily medication that prevents HIV negative people from contracting HIV. Anyone of any gender or sexuality may take PrEP. How about organising an excursion for your young person to go and buy condoms from the chemist?

## **Year 11: Going to a doctor**

Consider getting your young person their own Medicare card. Young people over 15 can apply for their own Medicare card. Transfer requires some time and paperwork. Not only is an independent Medicare card a step into taking control of their own health, but it is a useful form of identification.

## **Year 12: All of the above**

At the end of the year these young people are young adults. Make sure they have the skills and confidence to look after their sexual health.

### More from FPV

FPV's podcast [Doing 'IT'](#) is produced to support parents and carers in Relationships and Sexuality conversations. It covers the RSE basics and more in plain language for the classroom experience from home. Available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher & Podbean.

For more information, to speak with one of our Educators, or for more resources:

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### Additional resources

For information about laws relating to sex and sexting visit [Youth Law Australia](#)

For information about keeping safe online, guidance on talking about pornography with young people and information about how to report illegal behaviour visit the [eSafety Commissioner](#).

### Want to know more?

Our educators are here to help. Find out more about our [Parent & Carer Information Sessions](#). These sessions offer parents and carers an insight into relationships and sexuality education, its importance in the curriculum and how to support their children on their own physical, emotional and social journeys.

